

High School Redesign Monthly

MARCH 2005

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

WELCOME to *High School Redesign Monthly*, the first edition of the CCSSO monthly electronic newsletter created to provide timely information on state-level policy and programmatic school redesign activities. In December 2004 at the U.S. Department of Education's National High School Leadership Summit, states reported varying degrees of policy and programmatic efforts to revamp high schools in their respective regions. The needs that states identified were quite similar and include

- **employing targeted outreach efforts to develop active stakeholder involvement**
- **transforming state plans into actionable efforts**
- **supporting high school student success**
- **identifying, sharing and applying research-based knowledge**
- **identifying, and implementing professional development strategies**
- **supporting adolescent literacy**
- **supporting special education and English language learner students**

This newsletter is designed for state education agency officials that work on high school improvement and redesign issues. The newsletter will address these challenges and identify promising practices to support states' ongoing work. Your continued feedback is critical to ensure the relevance of this newsletter to your work. Please direct any questions, comments, and suggestions to [Angela Hernandez-Marshall](#).

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUCCESS

Kentucky's Individual Graduation Plan

The *Personalized System of Services and Supports* is a key element of the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE's) Refocusing Secondary Education initiative. KDE is working to transform one component of the state's

graduation requirements—the Individual Graduation Plan, or IGP—into a tool for personalizing student learning in all public high schools in the state. While it has existed since 1998, the IGP did not become a graduation requirement until 2002. Now, it is serving as the centerpiece for discussions about how to improve Kentucky's high schools.

KDE's website describes the IGP folder as a tool that "is designed to help students focus on the connection between course work and goals after high school. Folders provide space to record information pertaining to academic and career assessment, career goals, four year high school



plan, interests/hobbies, school and community activities, and work experience." The IGP is also intended to serve as a tool for high school staff to gauge students' progress toward meeting the learning standards embraced by the high school. As such, KDE states that it is necessary for parents, counselors, and advisors to review and adjust the IGP annually as guided by the student's academic performance, career goals, and personal interests.

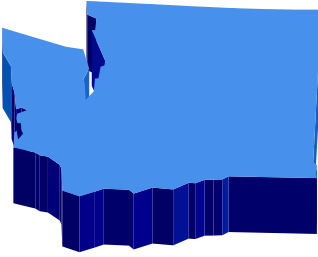
Currently, many Kentucky high schools ensure their students meet the IGP graduation requirement by assigning counselors to meet with students once annually to review and update the IGP materials. KDE officials realize that this infrequent encounter between a caring school adult and a student—particularly one who is in need of multiple supports—does not engender the personalized support that researchers and practitioners suggest help students to succeed in and beyond high school.

Some schools have exceeded the minimum IGP requirement to meet the needs of their students, and KDE is looking to them for examples of what works. (*cont'd p. 3*)

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUCCESS

Washington

Beginning in the 2004-05 academic year, the Washington State Board of Education is requiring the development of a **student learning plan (SLP)** for individuals or groups of 9th-grade students who did not meet one or more standards on the 7th-grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The SLP is designed to support students' on-time completion of high school graduation requirements.



At a minimum, the SLP for each student must include: the student's WASL results; a list of actions (e.g., courses, supplementary services, etc.) the school intends to take to improve the student's skills in the content area in which he or she did not meet the standard, and, strategies to help parents improve their children's skills.

In addition to disseminating information about the requirement and providing sample templates of SLPs on its website, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) provides a range of support to schools and districts. OSPI is using this first phase of implementation to

- initiate a pilot program with 150 school districts to employ a web-

based version of the SLP; click [here](#) to view a mock version (select "plan editor" for login)

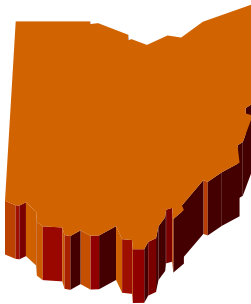
- assist all schools in implementing their student learning plans by developing and disseminating a **Student Learning Plan Process Guide**.
- school staff involved in the pilot program have been providing OSPI with feedback on the Process Guide for future improvements
- share timely information on OSPI's web site (click [here](#))

For more information about the SLP and other Washington high school redesign activities, contact [Scott Poirier](#), assistant superintendent for secondary education reform.

IMPLEMENTING STATE ACTION PLANS

Ohio

In late 2004, the Ohio State Board of Education's Task Force on Quality High Schools for a Lifetime of Opportunities presented four recommendations that were adopted by the Board: improve the learning conditions in Ohio's high schools; provide all students a challenging curriculum that prepares them for success; prevent dropouts and reconnect with students who have left the system, and, bridge the gap between high school and postsecondary education.



Through the collective efforts of the Ohio Department of Education (ODE), the Ohio governor's office, private foundations, and other state and local-level partners, Ohio's leaders are responding to these recommendations. ODE staff are taking advantage of this broad support to implement key strategies identified by the Task Force.

Improve Learning Conditions. ODE is addressing this first recommendation with help from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and its partners, to expand the conversion of comprehensive high schools into the small school environments that evidence suggests plays a role in personalized student learning. Further, professional development training opportunities for teachers are giving school staff the skills necessary to personalize instruction.

Provide a Rigorous Curriculum. ODE is currently reviewing the efforts of other states (e.g. Indiana's Core 40) and developing recommendations for more rigorous curriculum to be presented to a special committee of the State Board of Education. As well, an early college high school initiative has already taken hold in three schools in the state, and Governor Taft has proposed more. ODE has helped to develop online curriculum and assessment resource designed to help all educators teach rigorous state standards.

Prevent Dropouts and Reconnect Students. ODE has identified adolescent literacy as a key issue for keeping students in school. ODE offers training to help administrators develop adolescent literacy programs in school. Finally, ODE staff encourage schools to implement 9th grade literacy programs across the curriculum.

Align High School and Postsecondary Education. The Ohio Department of Education and the Ohio Board of Regents have been working in partnership with college and university leaders across the state to identify the knowledge and skills students are expected to master in order to succeed in college-level English and mathematics courses. When finalized these expectations will be widely disseminated and will form the basis of reform efforts that focus on preparing students to succeed in college and the workplace. Click [here](#) to view the Task Force report.

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SUCCESS

Kentucky (cont'd from p. 1)

State officials are also planning strategies to increase the usefulness of the IGP for planning students' academic pathways, and working to gain the cooperation of more districts and schools to do the same.

According to Linda Pittenger, the KDE's director of virtual learning programs, KDE "is trying to help schools move to advisor-advisee relationships where responsibility [for supporting students' academic progress] extends to faculty." School staff do receive annual training for using the IGP, but challenges such as additional training and time for teachers to serve as advisors, must be addressed in order to realize successful advisory programs.

Kentucky is also addressing the limitations of using a paper-based format of the IGP. Even for the many schools who fully embrace the IGP process, manual record keeping takes away time that could be better spent advising students. This challenge led state officials to work toward launching a web-based version of the IGP.

Among KDE's next steps is to continue working with higher education partners to plan for postsecondary admissions and placement decisions that can guide high school graduates' pathways to college or the workforce. For more information about the Individual Graduation Plan and other KDE work, click [here](#).

How can a web-based IGP help students to succeed?

- interface with existing data systems, including the uniform pupil attendance accounting system, gifted and talented student plans, program services plans for English language learners, and individual education plans
- give schools the choice for staff or students to report the information
- provide greater access to the IGP by teachers, students, and parents
- allow schools to move more easily to the advisor-advisee model
- help schools broker expanded learning options for students
- allowing teachers who share a student but don't have a common planning time to use this as an alternative method for collaborative student academic planning
- increase possibilities for working with higher education by interfacing with the state's web portal for learners of all ages (www.gohigherky.org)



Kentucky's Corbin HS staff use multiple strategies along with the IGP to guide students' pathways to college and work.

Maximizing the Potential of the Individual Graduation Plan

According to KDE staff, Corbin High School in Corbin, Kentucky, has demonstrated the potential power of the IGP. Corbin HS Counselor Karen Collins describes how the school has made it work.

9th Grade—Students participate in 9th grade advisories where adults review the IGPs continuously. Advisory takes place daily and allows for individual student surveys and student-reported data to be collected. Teachers use this information to guide students' selection of one of 60 "majors" at Corbin HS. Students may change their "major" if they choose.

10th-12th Grades—Students are assigned by career cluster to an advisor who they follow for the rest of their high school career. In addition to ongoing advisories, students are encouraged to participate in opportunities such as three-week work-based learning projects during the school year. Examples of targeted career training support for students are the business co-op program for students majoring in business, and a co-op program for special education students that provides training and potential job placement upon graduation.

Adult support for the IGP—While many Kentucky high schools have implemented a variety of strategies for personalizing student learning, Collins attributes the success at Corbin HS to the **block scheduling** instituted nine years ago. "Implementing these initiatives all at once is too overwhelming. It's important to break it down into workable segments" Collins adds. "Block scheduling was a good place to start."

Block scheduling allows for **greater flexibility of teacher time**, opportunities for students to gain learning experiences beyond the school grounds, and consistent advisory time. **Partnerships** with the middle school and the business community also help to make the IGP data more relevant to the student transition process both in and out of high school. Collins also acknowledges the necessity of **sufficient staff training** as well as **teacher leadership**.

BUILDING STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Pathways to College Network

With its *Framework for Action* and its *College Readiness for All Toolbox*, the Pathways to College Network (PCN) is forging ahead with efforts to provide states, districts, and local schools with free resources to build stakeholder awareness around the need for a seamless P-16 education system for all students.

In the context of high school redesign, the Network's efforts are focused on underscoring the need for high schools to implement common and more rigorous curriculum for all students.

PCN partners and practitioners have used the *Framework for Action* and other research-based resources in the *Toolbox* to support school counselors, principals and college outreach providers. States have already taken advantage of these free, online resources to inform their ongoing efforts, including

California

-professional development training at the California State University Literacy Conference

-the *Context for Change* and *Data Use* tools were used to train University of

riculum for all students, in the planning for the College in Colorado Initiative. PCN will also provide regional training

Montana

-PCN partners held conversations with members of the P-20 Task Force

Marshall Islands

-presentation to the Ministry of Education, College of the Marshall Islands and Public Service Commission

Pennsylvania

-presentation of the *Framework for Action* as part of the state's Project 720 High School Redesign Initiative.



A Framework for Action

California Early and Immediate Outreach service providers to support their work in schools with state-required transcript evaluation

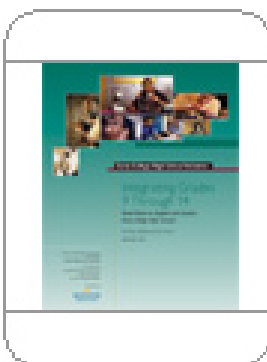
Colorado

-PCN partners engaged in state conversations about a college prep cur-

Some of PCN's next steps developing a school-wide profile for a "college-going culture" and "college access" with support from the Arthur Blank Family Foundation; developing district wide social support systems focused on college readiness; and, supporting the development of College Access Leadership teams at individual schools.

To learn more about the PCN and the tools identified above, click [here](#).

PUBLICATIONS & ITEMS OF INTEREST



Integrating Grades 9 Through 14: State Policies to Support and Sustain Early College High Schools

As a lead organization for the Early College High School Initiative, Jobs for the Future (JFF) has been working since 2002 to build awareness and provide support for bridging the gap between high school and college.

Early college high schools are an opportunity for students to graduate from high school with a diploma and either an Associate's degree or up to two years of college credit to be applied toward a Bachelor's degree.

In this latest report, JFF provides recommendations for state policymakers, including: dual enrollment/ dual credit options; eligibility based on student readiness; credit transfer to two- and four-year institutions; merging secondary and postsecondary funding streams; and, according greater autonomy to early college high schools.

For online versions of the executive summary and the complete report, click the report title above.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) is a nonpartisan, nationwide, nonprofit organization of public officials who head departments of elementary and secondary education in the states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, and five U.S. extra-state jurisdictions. CCSSO provides leadership, advocacy, and technical assistance on major educational issues. The Council seeks member consensus on major educational issues and expresses their views to civic and professional organizations, federal agencies, Congress, and the public.

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